

Metro Chicago

eWind

*Suddenly there was...a strong wind blowing, and...
they were all filled with the Holy Spirit... (Acts 2:2-3, TEV)*

Weekly Electronic Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago
A patchwork of varied news and announcements
from our churches, communities, denomination and other organizations,
covering a wide variety of interests reflecting the diversity of our region

July 15, 2009



I have set the LORD always before me; because God is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
Psalm 16:8

In this Issue

ABCMC NEWS.....	2
Celebrating Our Brother Phil.....	2
Family Cabinet Meeting	4
Family Council Meeting	4
Biennial Convention Report	4
General Board Report	6
American Baptists for Health Care Reform.....	7
Thinking Theologically.....	9

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS 9

 Religions around the World 9

 Ecumenical Picnic..... 9

ABCUSA NEWS 9

HEALTH CARE NEWS..... 9

 American Baptists, Take Action!..... 9

 A Faith and Heath Convergence: Connecting to Transform Our Communities..... 10

PRAYER REQUESTS..... 12

BOOK NOOK..... 12

 New Encyclopedia of Hispanic Religiosity 12

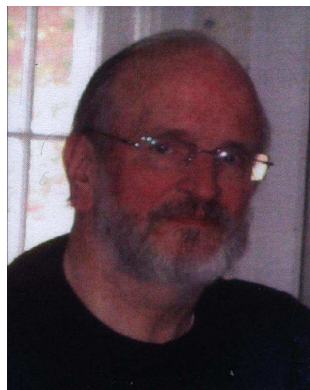
CALENDAR..... 13

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD 14

 “Clarity in the Confusion” 14

ABCMC NEWS

Celebrating Our Brother Phil



Rev. Phillip H. Yetter

Floods of people attended the wake and funeral of Phil Yetter, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berwyn. The wake on July 10 was a time of hugs and memories for those who loved Phil. At times the parking lot at the funeral home was filled with 50 or more young adults greeting and embracing one another. They were some of the many young people whose lives Phil had touched and changed when they were children. They embraced one another, no doubt aware that they would not even have known one another but for Pastor Phil.

At the funeral on July 11, the sanctuary at the First Baptist Church was full to overflowing. By the time the service, led by ABCMC Executive Minister Larry Greenfield, began, every seat was taken. A large group of young people stood in the narthex. Early in the service, Larry urged them to come into the sanctuary and have a seat. Young and flexible of joint, they found places to sit on the floor in front of the chancel.



**Green Lake
Teen Retreat 2008**

Perhaps Phil’s most recognized ministry was with young people whom he led into the church, brought to know Jesus, and helped turn their lives around when they took a wrong path. He also ministered wonderfully with everyone else at the church.

Although church secretary Judy Via had prepared three times as many funeral bulletins the church needs for Sunday morning worship services, there were not quite enough for everybody who came. They ran out of bulletins, a rare occurrence in most churches, and a testimony to how much Phil was loved within the congregation and beyond.

In the chancel at the funeral service was an array of fuzzy stuffed animals and

puppets that Phil had used in his ministry, in sermons and elsewhere, as a teaching tool for young and old alike. Their presence was a reminder of the warmth and humor with which Phil related to everyone, and the creativity with which he ministered.

The service began with the playing of bagpipes. The service included readings, hymns and other music that Phil had selected. The scripture passage Phil had chosen for the meditation that day was Philippians 4:4-9, 11b-13.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.



**Youth Leaders in Colorado
2008**

Larry remembered conversations he had had with Phil. He recalled Phil's and Sharon's generosity in providing air fare for the church's youth group to attend ABCUSA's 2008 youth gathering in Colorado after the group had purchased train tickets to the event, and then the railroad tracks had been washed away in floods prior to the gathering. Larry remembered conversations with Phil at that event in the beautiful mountainous surroundings of Estes Park. He recalled Phil's and Sharon's plans for the church—plans for Phil's retirement from his computer job, after which he would focus full-time on his family and the church—plans that had to be altered radically after Phil received the diagnosis of liver cancer.



**Phil and Sharon
Yosemite, 2009**

Larry met and chatted on the phone with a number of times following the diagnosis. As Larry shared at Phil's funeral, he once asked Phil what his essence was, what was the key to who he was. Larry was briefly confused when Phil responded that it was in his name. His name is related to the Greek word *philia*, which means love. Love is what Phil shared with everyone. "De man wi' da van," he went around sharing God's love.

Phil and Sharon loved being together in God's beautiful places, among them Rocky Mountain, Yosemite and Banff National Parks. In June of this year they journeyed together to Yosemite National Park in California. They had a wonderful time there, and enjoyed the beauty of the place, and the amazingly huge Sequoia trees there.

Beautiful places can remind us of Phil. He brought much beauty into the world through what he understood to be his very essence: love. There is nothing more beautiful.

The family requests that memorial donations be made to The Night Ministry, 4711 N. Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL (<http://www.thenightministry.org/>).



**Phil in the Sequoia Grove
Yosemite, 2009**

Family Cabinet Meeting

The regularly scheduled meeting of the ABCMC Family Cabinet will be this coming Saturday, July 18, at 9:30 a.m. They will meet at the First Baptist Church of LaGrange, 20 North Ashland in LaGrange (just south of > Ogden Avenue at the corner of Ashland and Bell). Metra (BNSF) trains stop within a block of the church. Please use the Bell Avenue entrance of the church building.

Family Council Meeting

The next Family Council meeting will take place on Saturday, August 22 at Garfield Park Baptist Church, 4100 W Jackson Boulevard, Chicago. A packet of meeting-related materials t will be mailed in advance to Family Council members. Please contact Tony Rake at the ABCMC office, 773-804-1655, or tony@abcmc.org no later than August 14 to let him know of your attendance plans, and whether you will stay for lunch. Check-in will open at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will begin with worship at 9 a.m., and be followed by lunch at noon. The suggested donation for lunch is \$5.

Biennial Convention Report

Thank you to David Gregg for this report. David is ABCMC's representative to ABCUSA's General Board.

First off, the matter of denominational restructuring. As we have been discussing for at least the last year, our denominational leaders have been working on an overhaul of the denominational structure, hoping to adopt new bylaws at the Pasadena Biennial Convention. Just to review, the new structure would have been smaller and more loosely connected, reducing expenses while giving the regions and the mission society program boards (National and International Ministries) greater flexibility for self-governance and innovation. The proposed structure was not perfect. The promise of greater freedom for the regional and program boards meant a danger of them drifting away from our shared values or even our denomination. The innovations, while creative, still could have gone farther to anchor us in the grass-roots mission of the local church. And the desire to avoid controversy threatened our public denominational voice. On balance, however, I felt the new structure promised enough in the way of new possibilities — not least the possibility of financial solvency — that it seemed to me better to support the change and work at improving it going forward than to oppose it and risk making the perfect the enemy of the good. Therefore, as both a General Board member and then as a regional delegate to the convention, I voted in support of the new bylaws.

As you have likely heard, although the proposed bylaws received a majority of the delegate votes, they failed to attain the required two thirds; therefore, they were not adopted. It is worth taking a bit of time to discuss just why, I think, as a window into our current denominational processes and their weaknesses. I have heard four main stories told to explain the non-adoption of the new structure: 1) the liberals of the denomination rose up in defense of the Baptist principles we treasure, which were insufficiently safeguarded in the new bylaws; 2) the denominational leadership did an inadequate job in their presentation explaining these fairly radical changes and came off looking unprepared or, to some, untrustworthy; 3) there were inadequate assurances that the mission societies (International and National Ministries) would continue to be irrevocably bound to the denomination in this world of greater freedom; and 4) these major changes really probably need the attention of two conventions, and so this vote was really a kind of “first reading.” There is a lot of truth to all four of these explanations, resulting in a kind of “perfect storm” that scuttled the ship.

There is, however, a more basic explanation, the lack of broad denominational participation in the process. The most obvious sign of this was the unpreparedness of many of the delegates as to the issues involved. Granted, denominational bylaws are a complicated business. Nevertheless, many delegates came to the meeting simply unprepared to deliberate or decide about the proposed structure. Many of the particular objections raised against the bylaws simply misconstrued them. This lack of understanding led to a guarded and even suspicious approach in the minds of many, for whom “change nothing” became the safer option. Many of the delegates who voted in support of the changes did so, it

seems, out of a relatively blind trust in our leaders; some of those who opposed them did so, it seems, out of a rather reactive mistrust. (Ironically, the liberals seemed the ones most afraid of change.) In this particular performance of the eternal balancing act, *prudence* won out over *adventure*, due in part to a simple lack of understanding.

Although we should expect delegates to come to the Convention having done their homework, their unpreparedness was not altogether their own fault. There was clearly a failure of leadership in tending to the process of education and preparation, a failure on the part of denominational and regional staff and ultimately of the General Board itself. We on the General Board felt only a diffuse sense of responsibility for the adoption of the new bylaws we were recommending; many board members simply left town after our meeting, before the start of the Convention, before the vote was taken. Further, it is clear that few board representatives did much in the way of educating their own constituencies back home during the run up to the Biennial. Where we should have claimed responsibility for educating our constituents and building support for the new structure, we too easily defaulted this work to our staff. Neither was there much evidence that the Regional Executive Ministers had educated their churches or delegations. This was perhaps the most disappointing failure. The regional executives played an inordinate role in crafting the proposed structure and would have benefited the most from its adoption. Yet it seems that only a very few took responsibility for the grassroots work of education and support-building in their own regions. Finally, with respect to the denominational staff, they did indeed send educational materials to every church: the text of the proposed bylaws, a written narrative overview, and a Powerpoint presentation. But these materials were clearly not effective enough to command much attention, especially without adequate ambassadors to interpret.

This system-wide unpreparedness is only the most obvious sign of the deeper problem. Early on in the process, the decision was made to delegate responsibility for the design of a new structure to a "Writing Team" comprised mostly of regional, national, and general staff, working closely in consultation with the Regional Executive Ministers Council and the General Executive Council (regional, national, and general staff executives). So this was generally a staff-directed process. While the General Board had several opportunities over the past two years to comment on the plans in progress, to adjust them through its own parliamentary processes (dominated by the General Board Executive Committee), and ultimately to approve or reject them, the General Board was both invited to be and chose to be fairly passive, reacting to what we were given. This means that the interests of the churches were interpreted by their regional and denominational staff rather than by their elected representatives. Further, it means that there was no real grass-roots process to elicit the convictions and the vision of our churches and their members as to the fundamental principles and aims behind our associating together. No Bible studies, no lessons in ecclesiology, no opportunity to step back and reflect together as a denomination. Neither the churches nor their representatives claimed the power they deserved over this process, and our staff stepped into the vacuum without bringing enough of us along. Although the margin of defeat was quite small, it is perhaps a gap wide enough for us to peer through onto the deeper problems of our current denominational habits.

So, now what? — well, status quo. The Nominating Committee, President, and General Secretariat were prepared for this eventuality, and so the appropriate slate was elected and other votes taken for us to continue on seamlessly under the existing system. But there is some real downside to this outcome. The current structure is enormously expensive (a single meeting of the General Board costs something like \$100,000) and the mission societies will continue to labor under our Baroque system of inter-coupled boards. Further, the features of the new structure that really were exciting, the intriguing models about different ways of doing things, will go untried in their fullest form. Finally, structural work has greatly distracted the entire system away from mission work, and though we are not necessarily starting over from scratch, the distraction will remain with us.

On the other hand, the upside is significant as well. The failure to adopt will give us time to address the material shortcomings of the proposed structure and to bring to a future convention something that is stronger, less risky, and more perfected. Further, it will afford an opportunity to devise processes at the local levels for education, support-building, and perhaps even — I hope — design input. Given that the current structure seems quite broken, however, I cannot predict whether we will end up better or worse

for the delay. But I can — we all can — hope, pray, and work to mitigate the downside consequences and to take advantage of these upside opportunities.

Before turning to my General Board report, let me say a few other things about the Biennial. First, as has become increasingly the case in recent years, the convention was an impressively professional and high-quality event. The worship services demonstrated a variety of styles of preaching, praise, music, liturgical dance, and even mime, generally without devolving into the kind of “show-and-tell” that sometimes happens. There was none of the ideological rancor in the air that has too often pervaded our proceedings, although the price for that relief continues to be a blander, less vigorous convention than I would prefer. Unfortunately, attendance was also quite low: about 1200 participants and 880 delegates, rather than the usual thousands. Whether this is merely the result of having a convention in an expensive, west coast city during an economic contraction or evidence of systemic disengagement, I do not know. Probably some of both.

Finally, our statement of concern, “On the Public Witness of American Baptists,” had a significant effect. Recall, this statement was recommended to the Family Council in May and adopted there as a proposed statement of concern for the convention. The Cabinet decided to move it forward as a signature statement — a grass roots expression of the people — rather than to go through the Statements of Concern Committee process. This proved to have been a challenging decision: getting the 150 petition signatures required translated into convincing something like 20% of the delegates (rather than the usual 5% or so) to sign on. The effect of that effort, however, was to raise the issue and spur a dialog that echoed in the larger debate over the bylaws. Signature Statements of Concern like ours are no longer voted on by the convention delegates, so we cannot know exactly how much support our position enjoyed. But the plenary discussion gave us a chance to demonstrate what the new bylaws would have disempowered, our denominational capacity to reason together in discernment of the mind of Christ. Given the feedback we received then and since, both privately and in various forums where these matters are being discussed, there is a new opportunity to advance this issue of our denominational public sphere in whatever new proposal comes forward.

General Board Report

Thank you to David Gregg for this report. David is ABCMC’s representative to ABCUSA’s General Board.

In some ways, the General Board meeting took place in the eye of the storm — having worked hard on the new bylaws in prior meetings, and not knowing what their dispensation would be (the GB meeting took place before the Biennial Convention), we were in the calm space between. Three noteworthy things emerged.

First, our Executive Minister, Larry Greenfield, has been mobilizing a coalition within the denomination — including several regions, National Ministries, and the Office of the General Secretary — to empower all our regions and churches around issues of healthcare reform. The denomination has a strong policy basis — the 1991 Policy Statement on Health, Healing, and Wholeness and the 1992 Resolution on Health Care for All — that challenges us to be involved in advocacy for a safe, comprehensive, just, accessible, and prevention-focused healthcare system. The General Board was able by consensus to bless this effort, captured in a statement called “American Baptists for Health Care Reform” (attached to my report). This was not an official policy act of the board — the policy is already on the books — but a sense-of-the-meeting affirmation that our existing policy must indeed focus us on our new national opportunity to achieve meaningful healthcare reform now. I urge you all to read the statement and act on it as appropriate in your local churches, with your state and federal representatives and senators, and throughout your various ministries.

Second, the General Board re-elected Roy Medley as our General Secretary for a third term. His plan has been, pending re-election, to take a sabbatical later this summer into the early fall, which will give him the rest, renewal, and spiritual growth he will need to continue leading us. In light of the non-adoption of the new bylaws, his vigorous leadership will be needed both to create a denomination-wide, grass-roots process for an improved restructuring and to spur us forward on mission and ministry.

Finally, the General Board received an address from Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary of the National Councils of Churches of Christ. This was an invigorating address, offering a glimpse into some of their re-visioning about the challenges of Christian ministry in a 21st Century world. Kinnamon addressed many of the traditional critiques of the NCCC. He had hopeful words for those of us who would like to see greater inter-faith engagement, as well as for those of us who fear a postmodern loss of our distinctiveness as followers of Jesus. And he had reassurance for those of us who value the strong work for justice, equity, and the ecology that has always characterized the NCCC, as well as for those of us who have hoped to see it champion a broader vision of Christianity to better include evangelicals as well as main liners and liberals.

Kinnamon also offered an intriguing insight: the work of the NCCC has always been done by way of a necessary paradox. On the one hand, the Council has always had to remain in connection with the local churches, judicatories, and communions, so as to enjoy their informed support and to reflect their aims and visions. On the other hand, as a body with a mandate for visionary leadership in its own right, it has always tried to be on the vanguard, blazing a trail for all of us, not by compulsion, but by true leadership. So, the council has always had to work both *with* the churches and also *ahead* of them. This seemed to me an interesting way to capture the work of the NCCC. More importantly, it describes the task of all our ministry and mission at every level, a fact that was not lost on Kinnamon or on any of the audience who were paying attention. In all our local churches, our regions, our mission societies, and (most poignantly, today) in our denomination, we need leadership that is both with us, awaiting our voice to arise from the grass roots, while also putting forth a vision that receives and galvanizes that voice, leading us forward into new ways of Christ-following witness.

American Baptists for Health Care Reform

Thank you to David Gregg for this report. David is ABCMC's representative to ABCUSA's General Board.

Background

In June 1991, the General Board approved a Policy Statement on Health, Healing, and Wholeness that included a "Situational Analysis," a "Theoretical Analysis," and a "Biblical/Theological Review" (providing an understanding of health, healing, and wholeness in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Christian doctrine) all of which served as a foundation for calling American Baptists congregations and clergy, regions and associations, and program boards, educational institutions, and related organizations to action.

The denomination-wide actions were to focus on educating, encouraging, and empowering American Baptists to live out for themselves this Christian understanding of health, healing, and wholeness, to let it inform their service to others, and to be the base for their advocacy of public policies that made quality health care available and accessible to and affordable for all persons.

The vote was 160 for, 0 against, and no abstentions.

In June 1992, the General Board adopted (by a vote of 167 For, 0 Against, 4 Abstentions) a Resolution on "Health Care for All," citing the Policy Statement it had approved the previous year and noting that the policy statement called American Baptists to "advocate for the availability of, access to, and the funding for quality health care for all persons" through "legislative health care measures."

It stated: "Today in the United States we have a health care system that is in crisis." And the resolution then presented statistics that "tell an ugly story" about health care in America and the inadequacy of the major policy alternatives for addressing the crisis. It concluded:

Therefore, as American Baptists, we urge the President and the Congress to work together expeditiously to enact a major program of health care reform which will extend health care coverage to every person in the United States.

We seek a national health care system that:

- serves everyone in the United States
- provides comprehensive access, care, and services
- is sensitive to the needs and rights of health care workers, patients, and their cultures
- promotes health awareness, disease prevention, nutrition, fitness, and safety
- slows the upward spiral of costs
- draws financial support from the broad base of the entire nation
- reduces unnecessary administrative costs
- reduces inappropriate medical procedures.

For nearly two decades American Baptists have drawn on this 1991 Policy Statement and this 1992 Resolution to work, *unsuccessfully*, for health care justice. For a variety of reasons, there has never been the political climate in the nation to achieve the necessary reforms.

- Until now. Until the summer of 2009. Until this moment when both major political parties express their commitment to reform the health care system, albeit in different ways.

This presents American Baptists an unprecedented – and probably one-time – opportunity to work effectively for the enactment of a public policy consistent with our longstanding biblical, theological, and ministerial mission and principles.

“Effectively,” clearly, is the key word. And “quickly” should be added.

Sense of the Meeting

In light of our historic American Baptist stance on the need for and the character of health care reform in the United States, and given the unusual opportunity to advocate for national health care reform in this moment, we urge that the Office of the General Secretary, the Board of National Ministries, and the Regions, in conjunction with the Ministers Council, American Baptist Women’s Ministries and other Associated Ministry Organizations, and the Caucuses, to *inform, prepare, and mobilize*, through publications, websites, and any other appropriate means, the ABCUSA constituencies as individuals, as members of congregations and congregational organizations, as lay and professional organizations, and as ABCUSA-related interest groups, to:

- pray for God’s leading and empowerment for participation as Christian citizens in the political procession health care reform;
- write national congresspersons (senators and representatives) to share and explain the ABC policy statement and resolution on health care reform, and to urge these elected officials to support and vote for legislation that embodies the ABC principles;
- meet face-to-face with elected officials in their offices for these same purposes;
- give voice to our concern about and commitment to health care reform in religious, commercial, and public media;
- join with other denominational, ecumenical, interfaith, and civic organizations in advocacy for the adoption of national health care policies that embody the ABCUSA principles.

Thinking Theologically

Every two weeks Protestants for the Common Good produces an electronic newsletter, *The Common Good Network*. Each issue features "Thinking Theologically for the Common Good," a column by ABCMC's Executive Minister, Larry Greenfield. Larry's latest column appears at the end of this issue of *eWind*.

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

Religions around the World

Explore Religions from Around The World at The South Church, August 3-6, 6-8 p.m.

Come explore religions from around the world at Vacation Bible School at The South Church, Mount Prospect. Children pre-school thru fifth grade - four nights of music, dance, art, stories and games. Dinner will be served. For registration info - call 847-253-0501 or visit thesouthchurch.com

Ecumenical Picnic

The Federated Church of Wauconda and most of the other churches in the Wauconda area will gather on Sunday, July 19 at Holy Apostles Episcopal Church for an ecumenical picnic from noon to 5 p.m. There will be a bouncy house and games for kids, and entertainment for adults. All food and drink can be bought on site for minimal prices.

ABCUSA NEWS

Other articles from the American Baptist News Service are available at <http://www.abc-usa.org/whoweare/newsservice/newsservice.aspx>

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Please see the above article, ***American Baptists for Health Care Reform.***

American Baptists, Take Action!

This request is from the Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED TODAY!

Late Tuesday afternoon, the House Committees charged with health care policy introduced comprehensive health care reform legislation that will reduce out-of-control costs, encourage competition among insurance plans to improve choices for patients, and expand access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

HR 3200 - The [America's Affordable Health Choices Act](#) - will ensure that 97 percent of Americans will be covered by a health care plan that is both affordable and offers quality, standard benefits by 2019. More information on the Act can be found in the [CBHC Action Center](#).

In response, today the opponents of health care reform are flooding the airwaves with their tired old scare tactics, hoping to erode the support of over 75% of the American public for a comprehensive plan that will provide affordable, accessible and guaranteed quality health care for all. It is **crucial** that we act immediately to get our messages out and counter their spin.



GET THE WORD OUT TODAY!

It is **imperative** that your voice be heard now! We are working to blanket the Illinois media with letters from health care reform supporters this week and next. Try out our new [LTE Builder](#) and share your thoughts with the media and your neighbors today.

MESSAGES TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LETTER

- Everyone deserves their freedom of choice. We should be able to choose whether we want to keep our private coverage, to choose another private plan, or to choose an affordable, quality public health insurance plan.
- Providing a choice between private health insurance plans and an affordable, quality public health insurance plan will bring down costs, make coverage affordable, force private health insurance companies to compete, and guarantee that quality, affordable coverage will be there for people no matter what happens.
- Providing the choice between private health insurance plans and an affordable, quality public health insurance plan will provide millions of hard-working families much needed peace of mind.

We're trying to keep track of where our members get letters get published throughout Illinois, so please send us a copy of your letter as well! Email it to [Kathleen Duffy, CBHC Communications Organizer](#) and let her know to which newspaper you submitted it.

Thanks for all you do in the fight for health care justice!

A Faith and Health Convergence: Connecting to Transform Our Communities

Program Description:

A conference for anyone involved in faith and health initiatives to learn, connect and renew our spirits. This is an interfaith event and we embrace a broad definition of health. All are invited and welcome. Those who may benefit from the conference include clergy and religious leaders, lay people who lead health programs in their faith communities, faith community nurses, chaplains, social workers, community health providers and educators, community health workers or anyone who is excited about the connections between faith and health.

When:

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

Registration Starts - 1:30 p.m.
Interactive Workshop Starts: 2:00 p.m.
Reception Starts - 6:00 p.m.
Lecture Starts - 7:00 p.m. (Ending 8:30 p.m.)

Where:

UIC Student Center East, Illinois Rooms A and B, 750 S. Halsted Street, Chicago

Fee: \$25.00

Program:

2 to 6 p.m.- Interactive Workshop

Converging Our Efforts: Building the Faith and Health Movement Together

There are many people involved in faith and health activities of all kinds across the metropolitan Chicago area. In this interactive workshop, we'll explore our history, learn about resources to help us work more deeply and strongly, and plan together for future collaboration and action. This session will include Round Table discussions on some of the topics that were scheduled for the Wednesday event including: HIV/AIDS, Aging and Elders, Racial Disparities in Health, Food and Nutrition, Mental Health and Spirituality, The Healing Arts, Access to Care, Cancer, Family Violence.

One Round Table will be conducted in Spanish.

6 to 7 p.m.-Reception and Networking

Share food and conversation with friends and colleagues.

Peruse resource tables from faith and health organizations.

7 to 8:30 p.m.-Lecture and Jazz Quartet

Converging Arts: What jazz can teach us about collaboration and transformation

**Dr. Sharon Welch, Provost, Meadville Lombard Theological School
with The Mike Smith Quartet**

Dr. Welch "wowed" attendees at the 2008 Faith and Health Summit with her interactive lecture drawing from principles of jazz and improvisation to teach us how to collaborate and work together in deeper, more dynamic ways. She encouraged us to be artisans of hope, wonder and creativity as we seek healing and social change.

Dr. Welch's work in ethics and spirituality embraces conflict, give-and-take, fluidity, picking up mistakes and moving creatively with them, having fun and listening to the themes of others as part of the work of social transformation and healing...and of music-making. She explores these themes in her most recent book, *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work*.

The Mike Smith Quartet, led by world-class jazz musician, Mike Smith, will accompany Dr. Welch's lecture, helping us listen for new ways to converge in our work for healing, in ourselves and in our communities.

The Mike Smith Quartet

Mike has performed and recorded with over a hundred jazz greats and is featured as lead altoist on the Harry Connick, Jr. album *Come By Me* on CBS Columbia. After spending time with the bands of Maynard Ferguson and Buddy Rich, Mike joined Frank Sinatra's core band as lead altoist and music contractor. Those years on the road inspired Mike's third recording for Delmark Records, *The Traveler*. Mike has continued on as the lead altoist for Frank Sinatra, Jr., touring Europe and the United States. He is currently active in the Chicago recording scene, teaches saxophone at the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University and performs with his group, the Mike Smith Quintet.

If you want to pay by check, please [download the registration form](#) (<http://www.advocatehealth.com/documents/clinicalevents/faithform.pdf>) and send it by mail to:

Health Advisor

Advocate Health Care

2025 Windsor Drive

Oak Brook, IL 60523

Or Fax the form to: 1-630-990-5567

To pay by credit card, continue below:

[Register For Event Online Now](#)

*If you would prefer to pay by check, please print, complete and mail this form, along with your payment.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray for God's guidance to those who are seeking to reform our health care system.

Please hold in prayer the people of Iran during this turbulent time in their country.

Please pray for the people of China during this time of ethnic unrest there.

Please pray for Sharon Yetter and her family as they move forward in their lives without Phil Yetter.

Please hold in prayer the First Baptist Church of Berwyn as God leads them into their future. Pray that God will provide them with courage and wisdom.

Please pray and take action for real reform of the health care system in the United States.

Please hold in prayer all those who are serving as interim pastors.

Please pray for ABC's volunteers in mission all around the world.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Charles and Sarah West, serving in Zambia.

Please pray for God's guidance for the leaders of our state and nation.

BOOK NOOK

New Encyclopedia of Hispanic Religiosity

For your consideration, below is the back page abstract describing the first encyclopedia ever written on Latino/a religiosity: **Hispanic American Religious Cultures**. This two volume set with over 86 contributors writing almost 300 entries is probably the most comprehensive, if not definitive work on this topic to date. The encyclopedia, published by ABC-CLIO Press, will be available this September. I thought that you, or your school library, might be interested.

For more information, click on to: <http://www.abc-clio.com/products/overview.aspx?productid=109933>

Sincerely,

Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre
Iiff School of Theology
Official Webpage: www.drmigueldelatorre.com

Description

This encyclopedia is the first comprehensive survey of Hispanic American religiosity, contextualizing the roles of Latino and Latina Americans within U.S. religious culture.

Hispanic Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, and religion plays a pivotal role in both the preservation of their heritage and their acculturation into U.S. culture. While Catholicism remains the dominant tradition, Hispanic Americans observe a diverse number of religious faiths, including Pentecostalism, Judaism, and Buddhism.

Spanning two volumes, *Hispanic American Religious Cultures* encompasses the full diversity of faiths and spiritual beliefs practiced among Hispanic Americans. It is the first comprehensive work to provide historic contexts for the many religious identities expressed among Hispanic Americans.

The entries of this encyclopedia cover a range of spiritual affiliations, including Christian religious expressions, world faiths, and indigenous practices. Coverage includes historical development, current practices, and key individuals, while additional essays look at issues across various traditions. By examining the distinctive Hispanic interpretations of religious traditions, *Hispanic American Religious Cultures* explores the history of Latino and Latina Americans and the impact of living in the United States on their culture.

Series Features

- Approximately 100 entries on the institutions, religious doctrines, practices, figures, and events that are key to an informed, multifaceted perspective on each group's relationship to faith
- Essays on specific topics, including forms of worship, rituals, and social and economic issues

Title Features

- More than 100 entries on specific religious and spiritual traditions among Hispanic Americans, detailing the historic development of their distinctive Latino/a character
- Dozens of contributing scholars, each an expert in Hispanic religious traditions

Highlights

- Covers the full breadth of religious expression among the fastest-growing population in the United States
- Written by scholars with experience inside the various sacred traditions covered
- Shows how long-held spiritual beliefs and the experience of living in the United States have shaped distinctive Hispanic American elements in the practice of mainstream faiths
- Provides scholarly perspectives that challenge standard theological interpretations of religious topics

CALENDAR

NOW—Please take action—phone calls, emails, letters to the editor—for health care reform.

July 18—Family Cabinet meeting, First Baptist Church of La Grange, 20 N. Ashland Avenue, La Grange, 9:30 a.m.

July 21—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m.

July 20-25—Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America summer conference, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah. See www.bpfna.org for more information.

July 25-31—National AB Women's Conference, Lake Williamson Christian Center, Carlinville, Illinois.

July 26—Larry Greenfield preaches at Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette.

July 26—Tony Rake preaches at Federated Church of Wauconda, 200 S. Barrington Road, Wauconda, 9 a.m.

July 28-29—2009 Ministry in Hard Times Event, Geist Christian Church, 12756 Promise Road, Fishers, Indiana. Register at https://21stcenturystrategiesinc.com/cart/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=33&products_id=381&zenid=af0c4a158b8b285942b5e05e8e642f84

July 30—Memorial service for Rev. Julian C. Herrin, Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, 1712 Willow Drive, Chapel Hill, NC.

August 3-6—Vacation Bible School, The South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, 6-8 p.m. For registration info - call 847-253-0501 or visit thesouthchurch.com

August 3-7—Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, presented by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, 22W 415 Butterfield Road, Glen Ellyn. For information, please visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

August 3-14—Vacation Bible School, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

August 11—Faith and Health Convergence: Connecting to Transform Our Communities, UIC Student Center East, Illinois Rooms A and B, 750 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, 1:30-8:30 p.m.

August 18—Property and Finance Committee meeting, 3 p.m.

August 22—Family Council meeting Garfield Park Baptist Church, 4100 W Jackson Boulevard, Chicago. Check-in opens at 8:30 a.m.; meeting begins at 9 a.m. Please register in advance, no later than August 18.

September 12—ABC MC Stewardship Seminar, 10 a.m.

September 15—Kids Hope United 19th Annual Golf Outing, Bonnie Brook Golf Course, Waukegan.

November 3-7—2009 Black Church Conference, Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 500 Holiday Plaza Drive, Matteson, Illinois.

November 14—ABC MC Annual Meeting

November 3-12, 2010—Journey through the Land of Israel with Irving Park Baptist Church.

The Metro Chicago *eWind* is an electronic communication intended for the people of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. The events publicized herein do not necessarily express the opinions of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. We email the newsletter each Wednesday. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to the editor, Lynne Kelley, at lynne@abcmc.org. If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-804-1655. The ABCMC office is at 7035 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 102, Chicago, Illinois 60707

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD

July 10, 2009

Larry L. Greenfield

“Clarity in the Confusion”

I challenge anybody to provide a simple, definitive, and declarative interpretation of the opening statement in the Letter to the Ephesians.

No, not the first two verses, which is a fairly standard salutation in letters attributed to the Apostle Paul to the earliest churches.

I mean starting with verse 3 and continuing through verse 14. So much is going on here that translators can't even agree on where to put the commas. And talk about convoluted ideas!

“Spiritual blessings in the heavenly places,” for starters (verse 3): what could that mean?

“Chose us in him before the foundation of the world,” (verse 4): Surrrrrrre!

“...to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved,” (verse 6): there had to be a more straightforward way of making this point!

Well, I could go on. But a declaration from J. Armitage Robinson in 1904 pretty much makes my point:

The twelve verses which follow [the opening salutation] baffle our analysis. They are a kaleidoscope of dazzling lights and shifting colours: at first we fail to find a trace of order or method. They are like the preliminary flight of the eagle, rising and wheeling around, as though for a while uncertain what direction in his boundless freedom he shall take.

My former Old Testament teacher at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Jay Wilcoxon, adds to this early 20th century quote:

The difficulty is compounded by the fact that what are six complex sentences in the NRSV translation is a *single* sentence in Greek, as modern editors punctuate it.

A good contemporary analogy might be trying to make sense of the legislative processes of our local, state, and national governmental units.

Or better yet: trying to make sense of the reforms being proposed for those legislative processes, either because they have outlived their usefulness or because the old processes have become so manipulated as to deny a democratic form of civic polity rather than be an expression of it.

The so-called reform plans are, I suspect, as confusing as the opening verses of Ephesians, in this political case because every attempt is being made to retain as many as possible of the unjustifiable privileges and benefits of those in power even while utilizing the rhetoric of reform to hide them.

My own state of Illinois is a good example: the state legislature rejected a set of simple, straightforward, definitive recommendations from a blue-ribbon panel on government ethics and campaign finance reform and instead created a complicated hodgepodge of what seem to be deliberately ambiguous new rules that serve primarily to insure the reelection of incumbents and to make it possible for party leaders to transfer large amounts of campaign funds and unlimited “in-kind” donations to their candidates.

The consequence? Those elected will become even more responsive and accountable to their party leaders than to their own constituents.

At the most opportune time for thorough and far-reaching reform, given the scandals that have plagued the state in recent months, our legislators have been rhetorically bold but, in reality, tepid and self-serving.

A confusing complexity clouds the simple and clear demands of democracy.

My own way of making sense of the opening clauses of Ephesians is to ask what are the practical

consequences of all complicated and confusing rhetoric. Yes, there is plenty in the passage about our divine election and predestined adoption. Yes, there is plenty about redemption from our sins and the revelation that gives us a clue about God's mysterious will.

But in the end, as far as I can tell, the whole point is that followers of Jesus are to be "holy and blameless" in every part of our being (verse 4). And just to make it abundantly clear, the writer tells the reader that being "holy and blameless" is defined not by the usual definitions of those terms, but by the single standard of "love." The consequence of our divine election, our understanding of the divine mysteries, our divine salvation is that we are to be loving in every part of our being.

Something like that question about the clear practical consequences of proposals for political reform needs to be asked of our leaders. Amidst all the complexity and confusion, we need a clear answer to the question that goes something like this: in this democracy of ours, do these proposals help or hinder the rule of "we the people"?